



News Release

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Media Contact:

Sam Vanous, Ph.D.

HMO Health Program Manager

(o) 801-538-7074 (m) 801-231-3354

Utah Health Plans Rated in 12th Annual Report

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Understanding what a health plan can do for you and your family is more important than ever. The *2008 Performance Report for Utah Commercial HMOs and Medicaid & CHIP Health Plans*, released today by the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) Health Data Committee (HDC) and Division of Health Care Financing, evaluates quality of performance and member satisfaction of selected Utah health plans covering more than 900,000 members across the state.

Performance measures come from data collected by Utah health plans as well as a consumer satisfaction survey. Participating commercial HMOs were: Altius Health Plans, Regence HealthWise, Select Access, and UnitedHealthcare of Utah. Participating Medicaid HMOs included Healthy U and Molina Healthcare of Utah, as well as two plans administered by UDOH. Select Access Preferred Provider Network and the Fee for Service Plan. Two Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) plans are also included: Public Employees Health Program and Molina Healthcare of Utah.

"This report will help health plans identify areas for improvement that will ultimately benefit the entire health care system," said Dr. David N. Sundwall, UDOH Executive Director.

"We're pleased to note that many important measures, like childhood immunizations, have increased significantly since we began monitoring health plan performance in 1996."

The report describes how Utah HMOs are performing in selected areas of health care. Results show all commercial HMOs either met or exceeded national averages in providing child immunizations and blood sugar testing for diabetics. Over the past five years, the rate of pregnant women in commercial HMOs who receive timely prenatal care increased 26 percent. Commercial HMOs were above national averages for effective treatment of children with asthma, though they scored lower than national counterparts in preventive care and access measures like breast cancer screenings, well-child visits, and children's access to primary care providers.

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Medicaid HMOs scored higher than the national average on several performance measures, including children's access to primary care, timeliness of prenatal care, childhood immunizations, and eye exams for diabetics, but could improve in providing chlamydia screenings for women ages 16 to 25.

Utah's CHIP HMOs were on par with or above national averages for child immunizations and well-child visits, but could do better in the treatment of children with upper respiratory infections and adolescent immunizations.

The 2008 Performance Report also details results of the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (CAHPS) survey conducted by independent research firm DataStat, Inc. in the spring of 2008. A total of 4,509 parents answered the survey, including: 1,325 parents of children enrolled in commercial HMOs; 1,857 parents of children enrolled in Medicaid health plans and; 1,327 parents of children enrolled in CHIP HMOs. The survey measured consumer satisfaction in several areas of care and service received from the health plan in the past year.

Commercial health plans exceeded national averages in measures like doctor communication and overall rating of health plan, but ranked lower in getting needed care. Nearly nine out of 10 (89.5%) respondents were satisfied with the health care they received. Medicaid and CHIP health plans scored above national averages in most customer satisfaction measures, including ratings for physicians, specialists, and health plan overall. Customer service rated below national average in all three reporting categories: commercial, Medicaid, and CHIP.

For a copy of the report, which includes graphics that illustrate performance measures and survey outcomes, please visit <http://health.utah.gov/hda/reports/2008/hmo/>.

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The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.